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ABSTRACT

This report describes the room arrangement, design, and appearance of 152 Title IV-A Day Care centers in Philadelphia. A series of 27 items on a section of the Daily Care, In-Room Observation Guide was used to provide an overall description of rooms in day care and to identify differences in features for different types of programs. Data were analyzed by four program types: (1) infant/toddler, (2) preschool/school age, (3) school age, and (4) specialized. The overall typical room is described in terms of such aspects as interest areas, furnishings, storage of materials, cleanliness, carpeting, acoustics, lighting, windows, access to outdoors, hard and soft areas, high and low areas, and structures that children can get inside of. The typical room for each program type varied only slightly from the typical room for all programs. Specialized programs had hard and soft areas built in for tactile stimulation, and infant/toddler and specialized programs had carpeted areas. Approximately half of the report consists of data presented in tabular form. (Author/JMB)

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A DESCRIPTION OF ROOM ARRANGEMENT, DESIGN, AND APPEARANCE IN TITLE IV-A DAY CARE CENTERS IN PHILADELPHIA 1974-1975

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ABSTRACT

The Evaluation Unit visited 152 Title IV-A Day Care centers in Philadelphia during the 1974-1975 fiscal year. Each room was described on a section of the Daily Care, In-Room Observation Guide, by responses to a series of 27 items. These items were designed to provide a description of the room in terms of its furnishing arrangements, its design, and its appearance. Each of the rooms used for daily care was visited and described, yielding an overall description of rooms in day care, as well as differences in features for different types of programs. Programs were designated as Infant/Toddler, Preschool/School Age, School Age, and Specialized Agencies.

The typical room was arranged to provide either a clearly defined "interest area" with large work/play space, or a central work area with peripheral storage areas. The room's furnishings were easily moved. Materials were stored on low, open shelving, and toys and materials could be reached and returned by the children. The rooms were generally clean and neat. Displays appeared fresh. They came from a variety of sources and their content varied.

The typical room had no areas actually carpeted and no sound absorbent materials on the walls, but in half the rooms, the ceilngs were acoustical. There was natural light, but not necessarily from windows through which children might see eventsoccurring outside. The typical room had no direct access to the outdoors (excluding fire escapes), no hard and soft built in areas, no high and low areas (excluding climbing furniture), and no structure to be inside of, such as a tunnel.

The typical room for each program type varied only slightly from the typical room for all programs. Specialized Programs had hard and soft areas built in for tactile stimulation, and Infant/Toddler and Specialized Programs had areas actually carpeted.

A DESCRIPTION OF ROOM ARRANGEMENT, DESIGN, AND APPEARANCE IN TITLE IV-A DAY CARE CENTERS IN PHILADELPHIA 1974-1975

Introduction

This report is one of three reports written by the Day Care Services Evaluation Unit based on data obtained from the Daily Care/Education Program, In-Room Observation Guide during 1974-1975. This instrument was developed by the unit to document room arrangement, design, and provisioning, as well as daily activities and routines in Title IV-A Day Care centers.

This report deals specifically with those items in the instrument which describe the day care room's arrangement, design, and appearance. It is concerned with the physical arrangement of the room, storage of materials, aesthetic aspects of the room, description of displays, and the presence of particular design features.

This report focuses on analysis of the data by four program types: (1) Infant/Toddler, (2) Preschool, School Age, (3) School Age, and (4) Specialized Agency. It's purpose is to make a summary statement about the room arrangement, design and appearance aspect of day care in Philadelphia while identifying differences among types of centers in terms of these features. Implications of these findings follow the body of the report.

Procedures

Data were collected using the Daily Care/Education Program, In-Room Observation Guide from 152 Title IV-A Day Care centers in Philadelphia.

Day Care Evaluation staff obtained the information from direct observation in these centers from December 1974 to June 1975. As part of the observation routine, the collected data were immediately discussed with the Lead Teacher or Director of the center.

Two methods of describing the data are used in this report. The first consists of a description of the "typical" Day Care room in terms of arrangement, design, and appearance items from the Daily Care instrument, by using the most frequently recorded responses to each item. The second involves a description of differences in these characteristics among the four types of centers in day care. Even though data were collected at the room level, and the "typical room" is described in the report, the categories of program type (Infant/Toddler, Preschool/School Age, School Age and Specialized Agency) used were based on a center level approach, a function of the analysis deemed most appropriate for describing arrangement, design, and appearance characteristics in day care. This is in contrast to the two other reports on Daily Care instrument data, where the concern of the analysis and the report was judged to be best focused at the room level.

Findings

A total of 482 rooms in 152 Day Care centers were observed and information about room arrangement, design, and appearance was recorded using the appropriate items from the Daily Care instrument. This information, which can be found in the Appendix, on an item by item basis, was examined in two ways. First, by using the most frequent response to each item, a description of a "typical" Day Care room was complied. Second, a comparison of the four types of centers (Infant/Toddler, Preschool/School Age, School Age, and Specialized) was made and differences among the centers' rooms were highlighted.

1. Based upon the data, the "typical" Day Care room possessed the following characteristics:

The room was arranged to provide either a clearly defined "interest area" with large work/play space, or a central work area with peripheral storage areas. The room's furnishings were easily moved. Children could move without special supervision within one room or an integral anteroom (i.e., attached bathroom, play area, or cloak room). Private areas where children could be alone were not observed to be present in the room.

Materials for childrens' use were stored on low, open shelving, visible to all children. These materials could be reached by all children present and were either in the activity area or in the peripheral storage areas.

Bright enough for most activities and isolated from outside traffic, the room was clean and well organized in that things not in use were put away and litter was picked up. The storage closet, or cupboard, when present, was also well organized and kept straightened.

The fresh, newly arranged displays, posters, and art products in the room came from various sources, i.e., they were either commercially produced, home-made by adults, or made by the children themselves. The content of the displays was a combination of language (ABC's, words), artistic/self expressive, personal (body charts, hand prints, photos), and crafts materials, with artistic scenes and colors prevailing. The displays were positioned on the wall or hung from strings either at eye level for most children, or at eye level for most adults.

The room had no area actually carpeted and no sound-absorbent material on the walls, but may or may not have had an acoustical ceiling. There was natural light entering the room through windows that may or may not have been at eye level for most children. The room lacked direct access to the outdoors (excluding fire escapes), differently textured construction features, "hard" and "soft" floors or walls for tactile contrast, "high" and "low" areas for children (excluding climbing equipment), a structure for children to be inside of, such as a tunnel.

2. In addition to summarizing the data across the program in terms of the "typical room", a description of the different arrangement, design and appearance characteristics found among types of centers, i.e., Infant/Toddler, Preschool/School Age, School Age, and Specialized was compiled. These difference patterns were based on the frequency of responses to the particular items (as displayed in the Appendix) and reference to the item is indicated after each statement.

Infant/Toddler rooms differ from other rooms in that most materials for childrens' use can be reached by some of the children only, as opposed

to all children in the other types of centers (Item 23).

Preschool/School Age rooms differ from other rooms in a number of ways. The majority of rooms have clearly defined interest areas with large work/play space as opposed to a central work/play area with peripheral storage areas as in the other three types of centers (Item 16). The content of most of the displays was a combination of language related, artistic/self expressive, personal, and crafts materials, while the other three types of centers' room displays were mostly artistic/self expressive in nature (Item 31). An equal amount of Preschool/School Age rooms positioned their displays at eye level for children or at eye level for adults, while the displays in the other three types of centers were positioned mostly at eye level for adults (Item 32).

School Age rooms differ in that most materials for childrens' use were stored in cupboards rather than in low, open shelving visible to all children, as in other centers (Item 22). They also differed in that they had more rooms without displays than rooms with displays (Item 29).

The Specialized centers' rooms were the only ones where the majority of rooms had "hard" and "soft" areas on floors or walls to provide sensory stimuli (Item 40).

An equal number of Infant/Toddler centers clustered materials needed for an activity on peripheral storage areas or distributed them in various places without clustering. Most Preschool/School Age centers clustered materials in the activity areas. Most School Age centers stored the materials in cabinets and took the materials to the activity area when needed. Most

Specialized centers clustered material on peripheral storage areas (Item 24).

Finally, the majority of Infant/Toddler and Specialized centers had carpeted areas in their rooms while Preschool/School and School Age centers did not (Item 33).

Implications

The findings suggest the room's potential for supporting children's activities as well as their management, and their development. This is not to say that these factors were visible in clearly defined patterns, but simply that the room's arrangement, design, and appearance allowed for the possibility of these occurrences.

The following discussion of implications, for instance, seems applicable in view of the "typical" day care room described in this report. The room's arrangement tended to support the children having a choice of activities and working in small groups, thus giving the children the opportunity to play in a self-structured style. Room arrangement could be easily changed, suggesting the possibility of having different types of activities in the room (small group play versus large group body movement activities). Although the room was usually one in which there was a single "group work/play" area, it seemed that toileting and putting-on/removing outdoor clothing, could be easily accomplished without unnecessary delay or supervision. The lack of private areas indicates the possibility that children must remain in contact with other children. This raises the question of what steps are taken and/or facilities provided if children desire to be alone for a brief period of time.

Materials were stored in such a manner as to allow the children to obtain and return them for an activity. This seems to encourage the possibility of the children taking responsibility for preparation and clean-up of their own activities.

The overall cleanliness and organization of the room appears to indicate that teachers and other day care staff are providing appropriate model behavior for the children.

While the construction of the room indicates the possibility of the rooms not being designed specifically for day care use, the displays, posters, and art products in the room reflect a broad developmental emphasis.

They allow for the possibility of an improvement in self-concept through the children's "involvement" with their own art work due to the positioning of some of the displays at eye level for children. (It should be noted that when the staff at day care centers were made aware that some of their displays were at eye level for adults, they lowered the displays so that the children could receive maximum benefit.)

When each type of center is compared with the "typical" center, the following information emerges:

The construction of Infant/Toddler rooms suggests the possibility that an appropriate design for storing material was not taken into consideration since material could be reached by only some of the children only. However, carpeted areas appear to have been incorporated into the initial design of the room. The clustering of materials points out the possibility that concern for socialization is not a primary emphasis with this age group.

Preschool/School Age centers tended to arrange the room into well defined interest areas. This would allow for a structured environment while, at the same time, providing the children with opportunities for independent work. The content of the displays suggests the interest in the

overall development of the children.

The positioning of the displays at eye level for children and for adults might be explained by the wide variance in the age, and therefore height of the children. The clustering of materials in the activity areas suggests the socialized behavior typically exhibited by this age group.

School Age centers tended to have separate rooms for different types of activities. Closed storage seems to be more appropriate at these centers since the children do not stay with one group or participate in one type of activity, but in fact move from room to room depending on the activity and take the necessary materials with them. These centers also contained separate cafeteria and recreational facilities, possibly offering one explanation for the absence of displays in the majority of rooms.

Specialized centers appear to be designed for day care use since carpeted areas and "hard" and "soft" areas on the floor and walls were present as part of the design of the room. Their clustering of materials also pointed to the possibility that socialization is encouraged.

TABLE 1

ROOM ARRANGEMENT, DESIGN, AND APPEARANCE

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
16.* The room was arranged to provide:	%	%	%	%	%
(1) a central work area with storage around the sides	55	23	65	64	32
(2) several areas (sub divided) clearly defined for work/play	18	18	15	6	16
(3) clearly defined interest areas with large work/ play space	27	58	7	28	49
(4) a formal classroom setting	0	1	13	2	2
17. Most furnishings in the room could be:					
(1) moved easily	82	84	61	85	81
(2) moved, but with difficulty	18	15	37	15	18
(3) not moved since they were fixed	0	1	2	0	1

*Item numeration corresponds to the item number in the original Daily Care, In-Room Observation Guide instrument. The first Room Arrangement item began with number I6.

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
18. The room was:	%	%	%	%	%
(1) isolated from outside traffic	40	83	85	98	84
(2) necessarily used by occasional outsider	30	9	5	0	8
(3) a passageway in continual use	30	8	10	2	8
19. Children could move, unsupervised,					
(1) within one room or an integral anteroom (such as an attached bathroom, play area, or cloak room	73	89	64	96	86
(2) between separate rooms close by	27	9	10	4	9
(3) several widely separated rooms	0	2	26	0	5

A-2

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
20. Private area(s) where children could be alone were:	%	%	%	%	%
(1) available and easy to use	18	7	6	10	7
(2) available, but required special work before one could use it	0	1	2	2	2
(3) not observed	82	92	92	88	91
21. Cribs were located so that most infants (if in cribs) could see:					
(1) most portions of the room	45	1	0	0	1
(2) at least one occupied space (including other infants in the same portion)	18	0	0	0	1
(3) mostly walls or empty space	0	2	0	10	3
(4) NA (no cribs or no infants)	37	97	100	90	95

A-3

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
22. Most materials for children's use were stored:	%	%	%	%	%
(1) On low open shelving and visible to all children	90	82	29	72	75
(2) on low open shelving and visible to most children	10	4	4	2	4
(3) in cupboards	0	12	53	10	16
(4) outside of the room	0	1	4	2	3
(5) not observed	0	1	0	14	2
23. Most kinds of materials for children's use could be reached by:					
(1) all children present	45	87	51	79	82
(2) some children only	55	6	16	11	9
(3) adults only	0	7	33	10	9

A-4

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
24. Most materials needed for an activity, or materials similar in nature were:	%	%	%	%	%
(1) distributed in various places, not clustered	26	3	4	4	3
(2) clustered on peripheral storage areas	36	27	23	67	32
(3) clustered in activity areas	36	67	29	15	57
(4) stored in cabinets and taken wherever needed	0	3	44	4	7
(5) not observed	0	0	0	10	1
25. Generally the room was (how light):					
(1) bright enough to observe fine descriminations	36	14	0	21	13
(2) bright enough for most activities	64	83	99	79	84
(3) dim, hard to read by or make distinctions in color	0	3	1	0	3

A-5/A-6

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
26. Generally the room was (how clean):	%	%	%	%	%
(1) clean, no dust or dirt	91	73	68	87	75
(2) relatively clean, but some dust or dirt, some areas could be vacuumed	9	25	16	13	22
(3) dust or dirt in rooms transferred to hands or clothing	0	2	16	0	3
27. Generally the room was (how tidy):					
(1) well organized in that things not in use were put away, and litter was picked up	91	84	67	85	82
(2) generally tidy except for one area or so	9	15	23	15	16
(3) untidy in that toys were scattered, and things left lying about	0	1	10	0	2

A-7

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
28. The storage closet (or cupboard) were (how neat):	%	%	%	%	%
(1) well organized and kept straightened	21	33	16	42	32
(2) generally organized, could be straightened some	7	6	14	13	8
(3) disorganized and needed to be straightened out	0	1	10	2	2
(4) not observed	72	60	60	43	58
29. Most of the displays were:					
(1) made commercially	9	5	15	12	7
(2) home made by adults	27	10	11	18	11
(3) made by children	27	26	25	23	26
(4) an even split as to source	37	55	23	43	49
(5) no displays observed	0	4	26	4	7

A-8

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
	%	%	%	%	%
30. Most displays looked?					
(1) fresh, newly arranged	82	75	41	94	74
(2) some fresh, some old (3 months or so)	18	15	14	4	14
(3) most were worn and/or dusty	0	1	0	0	1
(4) not able to tell	0	5	0	0	3
(5) NA	0	4	45	2	8
31. The content of the displays were predominately:					
(1) language related (ABC's, words, etc.)	9	12	13	14	12
(2) artistic - self expressive (colors, scenes, etc.)	55	33	25	68	35
(3) personal (body charts, hand prints, photos, etc.)	0	1	3	0	1
(4) crafts	9	1	9	2	3
(5) combinations of two or more	27	50	16	16	42
(6) NA	0	3	34	0	7

A-9

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
32. Displays on the wall or from strings were positioned:	%	%	%	%	%
(1) at eye level for most of the children	27	39	19	16	34
(2) at eye level for children walking (as opposed to crawling)	18	11	11	27	13
(3) at eye level for adults	55	39	16	31	36
(4) above eye level, even for adults	0	4	15	4	5
(5) NA	0	4	38	6	8
(6) not observed	0	3	1	16	4
33. Carpeted area in the room:					
yes	73	21	22	74	28
no	27	79	78	26	72
34. Sound absorbent materials on the walls (curtain, soft walls):					
yes	27	18	12	40	20
no	73	82	88	60	80

A-10

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
35. Sound absorbent materials on ceiling:	%	%	%	%	%
yes	45	33	27	48	34
no	55	67	73	52	66
36. Natural light:					
yes	100	87	73	94	86
no	0	13	27	6	14
37. Easy visual access to outside (window at eye level):					
yes	45	42	51	45	43
no	55	58	49	55	57
38. Direct access to outdoors (not fire escape):					
yes	36	22	12	8	20
no	64	78	88	92	80
39. Differently textured construction features:					
yes	18	13	10	34	15
no	82	87	90	66	85

A-11

(continued)

ITEMS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES				
	INFANT/ TODDLER (N = 11)	PRESCHOOL/ SCHOOL AGE (N = 367)	SCHOOL AGE (N = 51)	SPECIAL-IZED (N = 53)	TOTAL (N = 482)
40. "Hard" and "soft" areas on floors or walls (sensory stimuli):	%	%	%	%	%
yes	18	8	4	60	13
no	82	92	96	40	87
41. "High" and "low" areas for children (not climbing equipment):					
yes	18	8	8	2	7
no	82	92	92	98	93
42. A structure to be inside of (not necessarily alone):					
yes	9	7	2	14	7
no	91	93	98	86	93
43. The floor in at least one crawling area was:					
(1) multicolored and multitextured	18	3	0	14	2
(2) multicolored but uniform texture	64	1	0	4	4
(3) NA (no infants in room)	18	96	100	82	94